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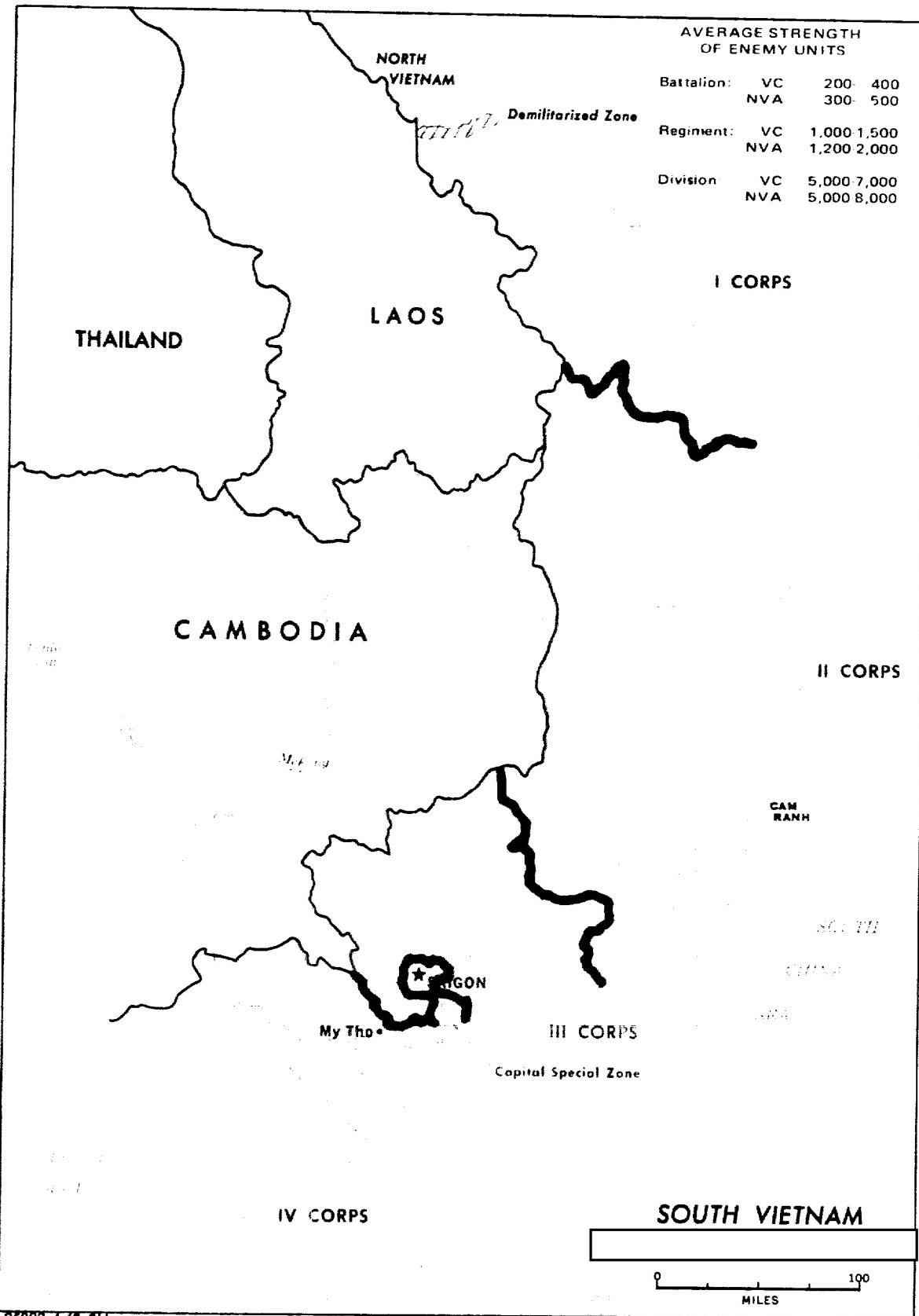
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[South Vietnam: Military activity picked up over the last two days.]

In I Corps action US forces killed some 74 enemy troops in Quang Tin Province, the scene of heavy fighting for several days last week. One US soldier was killed and 49 were wounded in the battle. To the north, in Quang Nam Province, another US unit came under heavy enemy fire, losing 11 men killed and 41 wounded.

Elsewhere, US sweep forces killed 85 Communist troops in three sharp skirmishes 25 to 35 miles north of Saigon. Viet Cong forces in the delta set off a series of explosions when they mortared a South Vietnamese ammunition convoy traveling through My Tho city. Four South Vietnamese died and 44 were wounded.

[] continue to depict enemy plans for another series of attacks, possibly similar to the widespread actions of 11-12 August. The attacks may be scheduled for 2 September to mark the 24th anniversary of Hanoi's declaration of independence from France. This is North Vietnam's most celebrated holiday. []

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Arms Control: Two draft resolutions on chemical and biological warfare (CBW) will be presented at the Geneva disarmament talks today.

These initiatives, by Sweden and Canada, reflect a desire to simplify the many existing international documents and diverging interpretations on the subject. Stockholm's draft treats chemical warfare and biological warfare together. It cites "a customary rule of international law" prohibiting CBW usage, including nonlethal gases, in international armed conflicts. The Canadian proposal refers to the need for greater restrictions on CBW, also including nonlethal gases, and calls upon all states to accede to the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

The Swedish and Canadian proposals will obtain wider support at Geneva than the British draft convention on biological warfare presented last month. The UK contends that biological warfare merits separate treatment. It seeks to avoid the key chemical warfare question of whether tear gases and other nonlethal substances are permissible under the Geneva Protocol and international custom.

Moscow has already attacked the UK proposal and has taken the position that the Swedish and Canadian drafts unnecessarily restate the Geneva Protocol of 1925. Moscow has said the Protocol is comprehensive regarding the nonuse of CBW and bans nonlethal gases. The USSR wants the Geneva talks to concentrate now on controlling weapons production. A member of the Soviet disarmament delegation recently remarked that Moscow is now working on the subject of control, but could not say whether a formal initiative was being planned. [redacted]

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Communist China: Peking's latest policy pronouncement underscores the regime's frustration over persistent internal disorder and opposition to its domestic programs.

On 24 August, Peking broadcast a joint editorial by the three major party and military journals that lashed out at those who distort Mao's policies and directives issued by the central committee. The editorial insisted that the only way to overcome such "erroneous tendencies" is to intensify a complex campaign initiated in September 1968 which involves, among other things, "rehabilitating" many former government and party cadres who were severely criticized during the Cultural Revolution.

Disputes over which officials are to occupy positions of authority and what policies they are to implement underlie much of the political disunity and sporadic factional violence besetting many of China's provinces. In recent weeks wide publicity has been given a tough central committee directive aimed at cracking down on unruly factionalists opposing cadre rehabilitation and attacking incumbent provincial authorities. The latest editorial also warns that "dictatorship" will be exercised over "criminal gangs" who disrupt public order.

Peking's latest injunctions appear to be an outgrowth of high party deliberations. They are couched in convoluted formulations, however, which suggest that differing concerns persist within central leadership councils. In part, the editorial reflects arguments by more radically oriented elements that not all of the tasks of the Cultural Revolution have been completed. It also reflects the views of those who believe the immediate need is to restore internal order.

Despite the strong language used to highlight the regime's impatience with the lack of response to its injunctions, Peking still appears to be groping for solutions to combat the problems confronting it. [redacted]

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Bolivia: The legislation introduced in the Senate to nationalize all gas reserves has again put President Siles under considerable pressure.

The Senate gave preliminary approval to the bill on 22 August. The bill, which is aimed at the US-owned Gulf Oil Company, was then sent back to committee for study and will be voted on again later. This will give the government time to try to sidetrack or kill the legislation before it comes up for a final vote.

President Siles told the US ambassador that the surprise legislation has placed his administration in jeopardy. He said that he could not support a bill that was potentially so harmful to Bolivia's economic development. On the other hand, to oppose the bill which has much nationalistic appeal would be to destroy his carefully cultivated popular support, particularly with students and labor. Siles is also concerned that this situation could provide the military with a suitable pretext for removing him from office.

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Afghanistan: The national elections that begin today and will continue until mid-September are not expected to alter significantly the slow-moving, parochial character of the Afghan parliament.

Most of the candidates are local religious, tribal, and village leaders--as were those elected in 1965 in the country's first democratic elections. They have little concern for government except when their own interests are affected. Personalities outweigh issues throughout the country and most voters are being influenced by their conservative local leaders. Although many of these provincial elders ignored the 1965 campaign, they have come to realize the increasing potential of parliament and are actively involved in this year's electioneering.

Afghanistan's nascent political parties, which are still not legally recognized, have played only a minor role in the campaign. Recent government action against several outspoken political groups has probably deterred more overt party activity. Nevertheless, the pro-Communist party has been propagandizing the countryside and, although still a small minority, could constitute the largest single group in the new parliament.

Intervention in the campaign by the government and royal family has thus far been selective and reasonably discreet. The government has not repeated its 1965 role of encouraging a large number of candidates to run and openly supporting them.

[Redacted]

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NOTES

India: Prime Minister Gandhi has won another round in her struggle with old guard Congress Party leaders. Their attempt to censure Mrs. Gandhi for supporting victorious presidential candidate V.V. Giri fizzled yesterday when the party central working committee decided to take no action on the matter. A split among party bosses appears to have left Mrs. Gandhi's strong antagonists without a majority. Open intraparty conflict may subside, at least temporarily. It is likely to surface again, however, as the party bosses fight a rear-guard action against Mrs. Gandhi's efforts to affirm her control of the government and to reduce her opponents' hold on the party organization. [redacted]

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Zambia: President Kaunda has assumed personal control over Zambia's dominant party in an effort to avert tribal conflict. Kaunda's assumption of emergency powers in accordance with party statutes is his answer to a bitter power struggle in the leadership which is widening a split along tribal and regional lines. [redacted]

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Cyprus: The pro-enosis National Front, which recently attempted to assassinate the director of the Cypriot Public Information Office, has now denounced officials of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation for advocating an independent Cyprus. The editor of a weekly newspaper has reportedly been threatened for espousing the same cause. President Makarios' temporizing response to these tactics has aroused anger among many of his own supporters, who favor direct police action against the National Front. [redacted]

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